

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-656. (Cancelled)

657. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 656~~ claim 678, further comprising drying said core material prior to said applying.

658. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 656~~ claim 678, further comprising drying said core material prior to said admixing.

659. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 656~~ claim 678, further comprising, after said coating, curing said hydrophobic composite.

660-664. (Cancelled)

665. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 656~~ claim 678, wherein said core material is selected from the group consisting of a particulate material and a granulate material.

666. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 665, wherein said core material is selected from the group consisting of sand, gravel, slag, ~~porcelainite~~ ~~porcelanit~~, dolomite, porcelain, basalt, quartz sand, coal ash, chalk, zeolite, montmorillonite, ~~attapulgit~~ ~~agapultite~~, flint, bentonite, perlite, mica, wood chips, nut shells, sawdust and combinations thereof.

667. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 666, wherein said core material is quartz sand.

668. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 665, wherein said core material has an average particle size ranging between 25 millimeters and 5 microns.

669. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 656~~ claim 678, wherein said adherent mixture further comprises a gluing agent.

670. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 669, wherein said gluing agent is a volatile hydrocarbon having at least 12 carbon atoms.

671. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 670, wherein said gluing agent is selected from the group consisting of liquid asphalt, paraffin wax, beeswax, lanolin wax, linseed oil and combinations thereof.

672. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 656~~ claim 678, wherein said hydrophobic powder has an average particle size ranging between 0.02 micron and 50 microns.

673. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 656~~ claim 678, wherein said hydrophobic powder has a surface area ranging between 1 m²/gram and 60 m²/gram.

674. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 656~~ claim 678, wherein said hydrophobic powder further comprises hydrophobic fumed silica.

675. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 674, wherein said hydrophobic fumed silica constitutes between 1 and 99 weight percentages of said hydrophobic powder.

676. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 656~~ claim 678, wherein said adherent layer constitutes between about 0.5 and about 7 weight percentages of said hydrophobic composite.

677. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 656~~ claim 678, wherein said hydrophobic powder constitutes between about 0.1 and about 5 weight percentages of said hydrophobic composite.

678. (Previously Presented) A method of preparing a hydrophobic composite, the method comprising:

applying an adherent layer onto a core material;

subsequently coating said core material with a hydrophobic powder, said hydrophobic powder including at least one impure element having a hydrocarbon chain attached thereto, to thereby provide the hydrophobic composite,

said adherent layer bonding said hydrophobic powder to said core material,

said adherent layer comprising a water-based gluing agent and said applying comprising admixing said core material with an aqueous adherent mixture containing said water-based gluing agent and an aqueous solvent, while removing all of said aqueous solvent from said mixture of said core material and said adherent mixture, to thereby provide said core material having applied thereon said adherent layer.

679. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 678, wherein a concentration of said water-based gluing agent in said aqueous adherent mixture ranges between about 1 weight percentage and about 99 weight percentages.

680. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 678, wherein said aqueous solvent is water.

681. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 678, wherein removing said aqueous solvent is performed by tumble drying.

682. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 678, ~~further further~~ comprising, prior to said coating, admixing said core material having thereon said adherent layer with an additive selected from the group consisting of a coloring agent, a UV resistant agent, a bleaching agent and an abrasive agent.

683. (New) The method of claim 678, wherein said hydrocarbon chain comprises at least 10 carbon atoms.

684. (New) The method of claim 678, wherein said hydrocarbon chain is covalently attached to said at least one impure element.

685. (New) The method of claim 684, wherein said hydrocarbon chain is a residue of a fatty acid having at least 12 carbon atoms.
686. (New) The method of claim 685, wherein said fatty acid is selected from the group consisting of stearic acid, lauric acid, myristic acid, palmitic acid, oleic acid, linolenic acid and arachidonic acid.
687. (New) The method of claim 678, wherein said at least one impure element is selected from the group consisting of a metallic element, a semi-metallic element and a transition metallic element.
688. (New) The method of claim 678 wherein said at least one impure element is selected from the group consisting of magnesium, calcium, aluminum, zinc, sodium, barium, zirconium, manganese, titanium, vanadium, chromium, iron and combinations thereof.
689. (New) The method of claim 678, wherein said hydrophobic powder has an average particle size ranging between 0.02 micron and 50 microns.
690. (New) The method of claim 678, wherein said hydrophobic powder has a surface area ranging between $1 \text{ m}^2/\text{gram}$ and $60 \text{ m}^2/\text{gram}$.
691. (New) The method of claim 678, wherein said hydrophobic powder is calcium stearate.